

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 3, 2006

**ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT FILLS VACANCY IN KANKAKEE COUNTY**

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Friday the appointment of Kankakee attorney Adrienne Wakat Albrecht to fill the vacancy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit created by the retirement of resident Circuit Court Judge Gregory Householter.

Supreme Court Justice Thomas L. Kilbride of the Third Judicial District recommended the appointment of Ms. Albrecht to the Court after an extensive application, evaluation and interview process that included review and recommendation by an independent 14-person advisory screening committee made up of representatives from the community and the legal profession.

Ms. Albrecht, a partner with Sacks, Albrecht & Gubbins in Kankakee, has been engaged in the general practice of law in firms affiliated with Leonard F. Sacks since 1980 with an emphasis on general litigation and family law. She recently completed a certification course for experienced attorneys handling custody and visitation disputes under new Illinois Supreme Court rules.

Ms. Albrecht has been very active in the Illinois State Bar Association and was awarded its prestigious 2006 Board of Governors Award for being "a tireless contributor of personal and professional time" as a frequent presenter at educational seminars for lawyers. She has particular knowledge in Illinois case law. For the past six years, she has been reading and summarizing for Illinois attorneys every reported Illinois Supreme Court and Appellate Court opinion. Her summaries have been published almost daily and have been available to Illinois lawyers on-line through the state bar association. She also is a frequent contributor to other bar association publications.

"There were a number of highly qualified candidates with differing talents," said Timothy L. Bertschy a Peoria attorney who served as co-chairman of the special judicial screening committee. "Ms. Albrecht has an outstanding record not only as a lawyer but, in particular, has distinguished herself statewide by publishing summaries of all Illinois' legal decisions since the year 2000 from the Appellate and Supreme Court level."

Retired Illinois Appellate Justice Tobias G. Barry, who also served as co-chair of the committee, noted Ms. Albrecht's breadth of legal practice over more than a quarter century while also raising two children.

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"She has appeared in my Appellate Court before me and others any number of times handling all kinds of cases, some of which were very difficult," said Justice Barry. "She's hard-working, to say the least, and as competent a legal presenter and writer I know. She's raised two grown children and did it all while practicing law full tilt."

Roger C. Elliott, a Kankakee attorney who has been an adversary of Ms. Albrecht in the courtroom, had high words of praise for her when he nominated her for a bar association award on behalf of the Kankakee County Bar Association.

"Adrienne Albrecht is an outstanding lawyer and one who epitomizes the best in good lawyering and the practice of law," Mr. Elliott said in his letter. "She has mentored a number of the young members of our Bar, is always available to help those who request her assistance and has always been ready to unselfishly provide her time and expertise."

Ms. Albrecht was born in Alton with a twin brother and is one of 10 children. She grew up in the Wakat family on the banks of the Kankakee River near Kankakee River State Park and lives with her husband, Donald, in Bourbonnais. The couple has raised two children, Patricia and Donald.

Ms. Albrecht attended the University of Illinois and graduated from the University of Illinois College of Law in 1979. She is active as a lector in her church and assists in the Kankakee Community College Committee on the Paralegal Studies Program.

"Justice Kilbride has created a very thorough process in recommending judicial choices to the Supreme Court, and I feel both humbled and honored to be selected as a result of that process," said Ms. Albrecht of her appointment. "I am looking forward to the opportunity of serving this community, the community where I've lived almost my entire life. I promise to do everything in my power to live up to the trust that has been placed in me."

Ms. Albrecht's appointment is effective December 1 and terminates December 1, 2008, when the position will be filled by the election in November 2008. Ms. Albrecht said she intends to be a candidate.

The appointment process used by Justice Kilbride included the special advisory committee, a written survey of registered attorneys in Kankakee and Iroquois counties which was conducted by the Illinois State Bar Association, background checks by the Illinois State Police and with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission and an opportunity for written comments from the public.

Justice Kilbride chose seven non-lawyer community representatives and seven lawyers and judges from the legal community to help him screen the six applicants.

The non-lawyer community representatives were: Joe Beard, police chief of the Village of Bourbonnais; Kate Cloonen, business owner of J&K Steel Erectors of Kankakee;

Kristine M. Condon,

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professor at Kankakee Community College; Mary Kay Morel, a businesswoman from the Bradley-Bourbonnais Chamber of Commerce; Lori Naese, a Bourbonnais realtor; Mike Smith, president of the Kankakee Federation of Labor; and the Rev. Howard Wills, pastor of Greater New Hope Baptist Church of Kankakee.

In addition to Justice Barry and Mr. Bertschy, members of the legal community included Chief Judge Clark E. Erickson of the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial Circuit; Ann L. Burkey-Brezinski, an attorney from Bourbonnais; Cynthia Cooper and Dana M. Meyer, attorneys from Kankakee and William F. Smith, an attorney with Homestar Bank in Manteno.

The Third Judicial District is composed of 21 counties across the north central part of the state, stretching from Will, Kankakee and Iroquois counties in the east to Whiteside, Rock Island, Peoria, Mercer, Henderson and Hancock in the west.

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**(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312/793-2323)**